

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1780

INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY RANGOON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 0390

RANGOON PLEASE PASS TO OAKLEY

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEAN, MY

SUBJECT: DEP. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OAKLEY'S DISCUSSION WITH MALAYSIAN
FOREIGN MINISTRY SECRETARY-GENERAL DATUK ZAKARIA: ASEAN

BEGIN SUMMARY. DEP. ASST. SECRETARY ROBERT OAKLEY ON A
24-HOUR VISIT TO KUALA LUMPUR, JANUARY 12-13, MET BRIEFLY
AT THE AIRPORT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER TENGKU RITHAUDDEEN, WHO
WAS ON HIS WAY TO HIS CONSTITUENCY. OAKLEY MET AT GREATER
LENGTH WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY SECRETARY GENERAL DATUK ZAKARIA.
ATTENTION WAS GIVEN TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ASEAN, AMONG
OTHER TOPICS (SEE SEPTELS). ON ASEAN, OAKLEY AND ZAKARIA EX-
PRESSED SIMILAR VIEWS ON ITS GROWING STATURE IN THE EYES OF
THE WORLD, AND ITS EFFECT ON THE POLICIES OF U.S., JAPAN,
AND VIETNAM. WHILE AGREEING THAT U.S. PRESENCE IN SOUTHEAST
ASIA SHOULD NOT DIMINISH, BOTH EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT
ASEAN'S ACHIEVEMENTS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE SELF-RELIANCE
AND STABILITY OF THE REGION. IN THIS REGARD, THE RECENT
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VISIT OF SRV FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN DUY TRINH TO MOST
ASEAN NATIONS, WAS SEEN AS EVIDENCE THAT SRV RECOGNIZES
THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH ITS ASEAN NEIGHBORS
TO ITS OWN STABILITY AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING. END SUMMARY.

1. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROBERT OAKLEY ARRIVED IN
KUALA LUMPUR AT 1500 HOURS ON 12 JANUARY. HE MET BRIEFLY

AT THE AIRPORT WITH MALAYSIAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER, TENGKU RITHAUDDEEN, WHO WAS GOING TO HIS HOME CONSTITUENCY OF KELANTAN. OAKLEY ALSO ANSWERED A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS FROM THE MALAYSIAN PRESS.

2. DURING OAKLEY'S HOUR-LONG MEETING 13 JANUARY WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SECRETARY GENERAL DATUK ZAKARIA ASEAN WAS DISCUSSED AS THE FIRST TOPIC OF INTEREST. ZAKARIA EXPRESSED PLEASURE AT OAKLEY'S ASSESSMENT OF ASEAN AS A "HEALTHY ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL BASE" FOR A STABLE, SELF-RELIANT SOUTHEAST ASIA. ZAKARIA, WHILE EVINCING SATISFACTION AT HEARING PERCEPTIONS SO CLOSE TO HIS OWN, AT THE SAME TIME STRESSED THAT MALAYSIA DOES NOT WISH TO "MINIMIZE THE VALUE OF THE U.S. ROLE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA." OAKLEY REPLIED THAT THE U.S. WILL NOT DIMINISH ITS PRESENCE, BUT FEELS THAT ITS ROLE IS MADE EASIER BECAUSE OF ASEAN'S UNIFIED POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STANCE. HE FOLLOWED THIS UP BY ADDING THAT ASEAN'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS HAVE HAD A GOOD IMPACT ON JAPAN IN ECONOMIC TERMS AND ON VIETNAM IN POLITICAL TERMS. THE RECENT VISIT OF SRV FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN DUY TRINH TO MOST ASEAN COUNTRIES CAN BE PERCEIVED AS A RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ASEAN TO THE SRV BOTH ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF RECENT SRV-CAMBODIAN FIGHTING. VIETNAM, OAKLEY REMARKED, NOW REALIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF ESTABLISHING TIES WITH ITS NEIGHBORS TO CONTRIBUTE TO ITS OWN
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STABILITY AND WELL-BEING.

3. ZAKARIA APPEARED TO SHARE OAKLEY'S ASSESSMENT OF SRV'S RECENT DEMARCHES TO ALL ASEAN NATIONS EXCEPT SINGAPORE. HE COMMENTED THAT IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE VIETNAMESE FOREIGN MINISTER, THE MALAYSIANS EXPRESSED A WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH SRV, BUT AT THE SAME TIME STRONGLY REITERATED THE IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACH TO ASEAN. IN THIS VEIN, ZAKARIA REVEALED THAT THE INCLUSION OF THE TERM "FREEDOM" IN THE JOINT SRV-MALAYSIAN COMMUNIQUE REGARDING THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY WAS A SIGNIFICANT GOM ACHIEVEMENT, BECAUSE IN THE PAST THE VIETNAMESE HAVE CONSPICUOUSLY OMITTED "FREEDOM" IN THEIR POLICY DECLARATIONS ON SOUTHEAST ASIA.

4. OAKLEY ALSO MENTIONED TO ZAKARIA THAT MALAYSIAN AMBASSADOR ZAIN, WHO WAS SERVING AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ASEAN AMBASSADORS IN WASHINGTON, HAD SOME UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE SOURCE OF HIS DIRECTIVES. OAKLEY REMARKED THAT THIS CONFUSION IS RETARDING PROGRESS IN THE US-ASEAN DIALOGUE. ZAKARIA SEEMED UNAWARE THAT SUCH CONFUSION EXISTED, AND SAID HE WOULD SEE ABOUT STRAIGHTENING IT OUT.

5. UPON DEPARTURE, OAKLEY WAS AGAIN APPROACHED BY THE PRESS AT THE AIRPORT, AND RESPONDED TO A QUESTION ON THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS MEETING WITH ZAKARIA BY GIVING A BRIEF STATEMENT ON U.S. PERCEPTIONS OF THE FAVORABLE CONDITIONS EXISTING AMONG ASEAN NATIONS. IN ANSWER TO A SECOND QUESTION, OAKLEY TOLD REPORTERS THAT US-ASEAN DIALOGUE IS CONTINUING IN WASHINGTON, AND THERE ARE PLANS FOR ANOTHER OFFICIAL MEETING IN JUNE.

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